

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11 OMB-01

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R 161906Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8207

INFO SECDEF

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 00822

DEFENSE FOR ISA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:: PINT, PFOR' UK

SUBJECT: THATCHER SHUFFLES SHADOW CABINET: A FEW NEW  
FACES AND CHANGES IN DUTIES OF OLD

REF: LONDON 18715 (NOTAL-DEC. 5, 1975)

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SUMMARY: MRS. THATCHER ANNOUNCED JANUARY 15 LATEST

CHANGES IN HEP SHADOW CABINET WHICH AMOUNT TO A SHUFFLING OF MEMBERS OF HER INITIAL CABINET AND ADDITION OF FEW NEW FACES. MOST INTERESTING NEW APPOINTMENT IS THAT OF JOHN BIFFIN ON ENEPGY WITH CHANGES IN DUTIES FOR WHITELAW AND GILMOUR. NET IMPACT OF CHANGES IN SHADOW CABINET IS MOD-EST STRENGTHENING OF TOP TORY TEAM WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT IN-DICATION OF MAJOR CHANGES IN TORY POLICY OR TACTICS. END SUMMARY.

1. MARGARET THATCHER ANNOUNCED JANUARY 15 CHANGES IN HER SHADOW CABINET AFTER WEEKS AND MONTHS OF SPECULATION BY MEDIA. CHANGES WERE LESS DRAMATIC THAN MANY PARTY MEM-BERS HAD ANTIAIPATED, NOTABLY THAT SHE RETAINED REGINALD MAUDLING AS SHADOW FOREIGN SECRETARY AND DID NOT INCLUDE EITHER FORMER LEADER HEATH OR SOME OF HIS CLOSE ASSOCI-ATES (PETER WALKER) AT THIS TIME.

2. PERHAPS THE MOST INTERESTING CHANGE WAS ELEVATION OF CONSERVATIVE MP JOHN BIFFIN FROM BACK BENCHES TO POST OF SHADOW MINISTER FOR ENERGY. BIFFIN IS WELL RESPECTED CONSERVATIVE MP REPORTEDLY AT ONE TIME CLOSE SUPPORTER OF ENOCH POWELL ON ECONOMIC QUESTIONS (BUT NOT IMMIGRATION OR RACE) AND CONSIDERED TODAY ABLE EXPONENT OF MONETARIST ECONOMIC POLICIES AND SUPPORTER OF SIR KEITH JOSEPH.

3. DEPUTY LEADER WHITELAW WAS GIVEN ADDITIONAL DUTIES AND NOW HOLDS HOME AFFAIRS IN ADDITION TO HIS ROLE AS DEVOLUTION SPOKESMAN. THIS MOVE PROBABLY WAS INTENDED TO GIVE WHITELAW AN AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY WHICH WOULD EN-ABLE HIM TO PARTICIPATE MORE ACTIVELY IN PARLIAMENTARY DE-BATE THAN SIMPLY HIS DEVOLUTION ROLE.

4. ON DEFENSE MRS. THATCHER MOVED IAN GILMOUR FROM HOME AFFAIRS TO DISLODGE GEORGE YOUNGER, WHO NOW RETURNS TO THE BACK BENCHES. GILMOUR WAS MINISTER OF STATE IN HEATH ADMINISTRATION FOR DEFENSE QUESTIONS AND HIS APPOINTMENT AT THIS TIME PROBABLY INDICATES MRS. THATCHER'S INTENTION TO USE A STRONGER AND MORE EXPERIENCED SPOKESMAN TO AT-CONFIDENTIAL

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TACK GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON DEFENSE (PARTICULARLY THREATENED BUDGET CUTS) IN THE FUTURE.

5. REPORTEDLY MRS. THATCHER DID NOT CONSIDER INCLUDING HEATH OR HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATE PETER WALKER IN THE SHADOW CABINET AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, HER WILLINGNESS TO INCOR-PORATE ON HER OWN TEAM SOME ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS IN THE PARTY CLOSE TO HEATH WAS DEMONSTRATED IN HER CHOICE OF

DOUGLAS HURD, WHO WAS HEATH'S POLITICAL SECRETARY FOR SIX YEARS, AS DEPUTY FOREIGN SPOKESMAN ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPECIALIZING IN EUROPEAN AND EC CONCERNS. IN ADDITION FRANCIS PYM WHO LEFT HER SHADOW CABINET BECAUSE OF HEALTH REJOINS IT AS SPOKESMAN FOR AGRICULTURE; HE WAS ALSO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE HEATH ADMINISTRATION.

6. OF THOSE CONSERVATIVES DROPPED OR LOWERED IN STATURE AT THIS TIME, YOUNGER LOST THE MOST; HIS DROP FROM THE SHADOW CABINET COMBINES WITH EARLIER LOSS OF HIS POSITION

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11 OMB-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 00822

AS CHAIRMAN OF SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE PARTY. YOUNGER RETURNS TO THE BACK BENCHES WHERE HE WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVE ON DEFENSE QUESTIONS AS A MEMBER OF THE BACK BENCH DEFENSE COMMITTEE. NORMAN FOWLER LOST HIS ROLE AS SPOKESMAN ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY TO PATRICK JENKIN BUT STAYS ON THE TEAM OUTSIDE THE SHADOW CABINET AS SPOKESMAN FOR TRANSPORT. JENKIN'S TRANSFER TO HEALTH AND  
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SOCIAL SECURITY WAS LIKELY INTENDED TO BROADEN HIS EXPERIENCE BECAUSE OF HIS EXCLUSIVE INVOLVEMENT WITH ENERGY QUESTIONS FOR ABOUT FIVE YEARS. (THIS CHANGE MAY ALSO REFLECT SOME IRRITATION WITH JENKIN'S FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENTS ON A RECENT TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST.) MICHAEL JOPLING STAYS ON THE TEAM AS DEPUTY FOR AGRICULTURE WITH PYM'S RETURN TO HEALTH.

7. THE NEW APPOINTMENTS TO FRONT BENCH BUT OUTSIDE THE SHADOW CABINET ARE THE HURD APPOINTMENT (FOREIGN AFFAIRS-EUROPE) REPLACING ELDON GRIFFITHS WHO APPARENTLY WROTE MRS. THATCHER OF HIS INTEREST IN LIGHTENING HIS SCHEDULE, JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON WHO BECOMES AN ASSISTANT TO AIREY NEAVE ON NORTHERN IRELAND QUESTIONS, AND IAN PERCIVAL AS DEPUTY SPOKESMAN ON LAW.

8. OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT TO MRS. THATCHER IN HER CHANGES SEEMS TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE THE BALANCE IN PARLIAMENTARY CONFRONTATION. BIFFIN WILL PROBABLY BE A BETTER PAIR AGAINST ENN; BIFFIN HAS A GOOD REPUTATION FOR PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE AND APPEARS TO BE STRONGER IN THIS RESPECT THAN WAS JENKIN. GILMOUR NOW WILL OPPOSE MASON WITH A MORE INCISIVE STYLE THAN YOUNGER'S. WHILE FOWLER DID BETTER THAN MOST PEOPLE EXPECTED ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH OPPOSITE BARBARA CASTLE, JENKIN PERHAPS WILL ADD GREATER PARLIAMENTARY EXPERIENCE AND DO A BETTER JOB. WHITELAW IS PROBABLY MORE THAN A MATCH FOR ROY JENKINS ON HOME AFFAIRS AND WITH HIS ABILITIES IN THIS AREA WILL LIKELY BE A STRONG PERFORMER.

9. COMMENT: MRS. THATCHER'S CABINET RESHUFFLE IS MUCH LIKE THE "REDDING-UP" OF THE BUSY HOUSEWIFE AFTER THE HOLIDAYS: A FLICK OF THE FEATHER DUSTER HERE, A SLIGHT REALIGNMENT TO THE KNICK-KNACKS THERE, RELEGATING ONE MOMENTO TO A LESS PROMINENT PLACE, AND BRINGING ANOTHER OUT OF STORAGE. IT'S A RELATIVELY QUICK AND PAINLESS

JOB, NO DOUBT THE NET EFFECT IS BETTER, BUT IT ISN'T A  
SPRING HOUSE-CLEANING.

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## Message Attributes

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